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SUBJECT: ABKHAZ/OSSETIAN PARTICIPATION IN UNSC MEETING ON
GEORGIA

Classified By: Ambassadors Alejandro Wolff for Reasons 1.4 B/D.

¶1. (C) Russian Ambassador Churkin has proposed holding a Security Council session in Europe, as was done years ago by the General Assembly for Yassar Arafat, if the United States refuses to provide visas to representatives of Abkhaz and South Ossetian separatists to appear at a future meeting of the Council on Georgia. In an informal meeting on August 20 of European members of the Council and the U.S., Belgium PermRep Grauls raised the appearance question as Council President, volunteering that Brussels was inclined to support appearances by all parties to the conflict. UK PermRep Sawers said "the Security Council should talk to the parties," adding that London would like to hear in other contexts from Tibetan and Taiwanese representatives. He pulled back a bit from these remarks with respect to the timing of any Abkhaz or South Ossetian appearance, saying that letting them come to New York might be "hard for us right now without territorial integrity language" in any Security Council resolution on Georgia. French Deputy PermRep LaCroix said "we don't have strong feelings on this."

¶2. (C) PolCouns contacted European and Latin UNSC missions on the matter on August 21. Most underscored the principle that the Council should hear from parties to the conflict and, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, concluded that it would be difficult to keep the Abkhaz and South Ossetians out. While noting their own arguments that the Kosovo issue was sui generis, including the formula for its representatives to speak to the Council (as individuals under rule 39), these diplomats acknowledged it would be hard to overcome the precedent set by the Council's approach to Kosovo. Some insisted that the format and timing for such appearances were separate issues and should be debated, but in the end acknowledged it was unlikely they would receive instructions to vote against Abkhaz and South Ossetian participation in a future meeting if we pressed for a procedural vote.

¶3. (C) COMMENT. Abkhaz and South Ossetian separatist representatives have filed letters with the Security Council presidency asking to participate in any upcoming Security Council meeting on Georgia. Should these requests come to a procedural vote, those members supporting the appearances would need nine affirmative votes with no veto being available. USUN's sounding of Council members convinces us that we have little prospect of producing seven no votes or abstentions to block. END COMMENT.
Khalilzad